

Prayer Triad #3

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4: 1-16

Scripture Question: What thoughts stand out for you in this scripture about the ministries of the church?

Discussion from the triads:

- *We have good ministries, but there is room for improvement. We need to draw more youth and young families – that is one ministry we really need to focus on.*
- *We all have different talents and abilities, but if one doesn't use his/her gift, then one will lose it. Some have confident voices so they can speak about their faith to others. We can work together to use our multiple gifts to work for God. Just smiling is a gift as few can stay angry or unhappy when someone offers a smile to them.*
- *We felt that the passage seemed to emphasize that we all have different gifts to be used to promote a unity of faith. The passage talks about children which we believe is symbolic of an immature thinker with undisciplined actions.*
- *We discussed why all churches (non-Catholic) could not unite as one and be churches working together. We should be united instead of divided. We should reaffirm that we want to be united in Christ and with other churches to accomplish things – we can't do it alone.*

Question 1: As a church, what are the common values that we share, ministries and programs we think are really important?

- *Some of the important things that we do are Sunday School, Meals, Cards, Outreach, Camp for Youth and Scholarships. We don't do well on some things that we should value like church attendance and addressing specific sins.*
- *Some of the programs we think are important are CWF/CMF, Fishes & Loaves, Hurricane Disaster Relief and other Outreach, Communion to shut-ins, Music program, 5th Sunday lunches, Camp Caroline, helping families with needs in the community, Hope Clinic, Habitat for Humanity and the Game Night fellowship.*
- *As a church we share the value that we are a Christian body, working for the good of the Lord. We think the card ministry, giving to Fishes & Loaves and outreach are important programs.*
- *Speaking to common values, we love this church and the people in it. We love the Lord. We think each ministry is important – teaching, music, outreach, missions, youth. We all have talents in certain areas that help us with those ministries.*
- *The values we share are the love of God and our church, the knowledge that Christ is the son of the Living God, respect for others' feelings and beliefs and supporting those who are less fortunate. Some programs that are important in our church are giving school supplies to children, foreign missions, Week of Compassion, help with local ministries – Fishes & Loaves, Christmas families, CMF/CWF projects, Camp Caroline – and the music program.*
- *Apparently music is important to us because we have a good part of the budget donated to it. Other important programs seem to be outreach, youth, CMF/CWF, card ministry, visiting the shut-ins, Sunday School, communication and building; however, each of these areas has potential to grow. There has been a lot of positive feedback from members concerning Elders visits and the card ministry. Our youth program is attracting some children from other churches too and there is good attendance at youth meetings and activities. We think that our website should be expanded and our Christian educational opportunities increased. The*

audio/visual equipment could be used in other ways during the service. It would be nice to have a video of the service recorded so it could be posted online and given to shut-ins. CMF might benefit more from project-based meetings.

- *Our important programs are our youth ministry, outreach and music. The question is how can we get people (especially young people) to come to church when the county has such an aged population?*

Question 2: What are two or three things we are really good at doing?

- *We are really good at meeting challenges and undertaking projects. We think we are making strides in outreach programs. We are good at giving – a generous congregation.*
- *Worship service, music program and fundraising.*
- *Two or three things we are very good at are outreach to the community, outreach to each other and welcoming people who come to our church. We can improve slightly on welcoming people, however, by following up with them after the church service.*
- *Eating! We love to share food and break bread with members of our congregation and we take meals to those who are sick or are in need of comfort. Sharing – Bethany is generous and groups who come to Bethany – One Voice, Fishes & Loaves, Irene recovery, Samaritan's Purse, etc... - are satisfied when they leave. Groups that request to use our building are rarely, if ever, turned away – Boy Scouts, Charter School, Zumba, etc...*
- *We think the things we really do well are youth program, outreach, music and CMF/CWF programs.*

Question 3: What distinguishes us from any other club or organization that might be doing good things?

- *Our belief in Jesus is the difference between us and other organizations.*
- *We do not expect or demand recognition for our good works. We, as a whole, share the same beliefs and we like to share God with others through our works.*
- *Outreach*
- *What distinguishes the church from other groups is our faith.*
- *We believe that God is the foundation and we try to do works in the name of the Lord and in the name of love. Profit is not our need.*

Question 4: Do we have enough emphasis on ministering to people outside of our congregation?

- *We need more programs in place; however, we do minister to those outside our congregation. We know that shut-ins get visits and communion. We send cards to community members outside of our congregation occasionally. Fishes & Loaves, to which we contribute, provides food for hundreds of families in our area and we have sent boxes of items to the military and to Operation Christmas Child for many years.*
- *No, we don't have enough.*
- *We have an outreach program that ministers to those outside of our congregation, but we don't do enough.*
- *We need to do a better job in understanding where the needs of our community are. Often the services that our church should provide are instead provided by the government and we have become lax in putting forth the effort to find those in need.*

Question 5: What new ministries to those outside of the church might we do?

- *Have better follow-up with members and visitors by having a mentoring program that includes the entire membership – like the Shepherding Program.*
- *Possibly an Afterschool Backpack Program – poverty-stricken students are given a backpack at the end of each day that has food and other items in it so they can have something to eat besides the meals that the school provides – but there may already be a program like that at ACS. We could research this opportunity. We would like to see advertising used to reach the outside – a simple pamphlet explaining our beliefs and giving important facts about our church could be placed in real estate offices or local hotels to encourage people to attend. We could also use Facebook as a way to let people know about our activities that we do as a church family.*
- *Try to get more kids to church for events. Have a revival with special speakers.*
- *We need to continue to do the ministries that we already do through the Outreach Committee, but we need to be open to seeing when situations arise in our community so we can better help the needy.*
- *Create a program that would be inviting to the Hispanic community. As Bethany means “house of bread” maybe we could take some to Hispanic families and invite them to our services and their youth to our youth activities. See if the Boy Scouts are in need of a meeting place or if the high school still has a Fellowship of Christian Athletes that needs a place to meet. Invite Laura Atienzo, the cafeteria manager at ACS, to give us lessons on large group food preparation and to see if she could share some recipes. Have someone come to help us learn basic Spanish or sign language so we could communicate with different groups of people outside of our church. Volunteer to read with primary and elementary grades at a school. Keep servings of something like soup and bread frozen and ready to be delivered to someone in need. Feed kids after school one day a week and provide help with their homework.*
- *We could propose ideas for programs to the outreach committee that could help people in our community besides just giving them money.*